



**The House of Representatives
STATE OF HAWAII**

NEWS RELEASE

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**KAUAI REPRESENTATIVE BERTHA KAWAKAMI TO
RETIRE AFTER 19 YEARS OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICE**

Honolulu. State Representative Bertha Kawakami announced today that she will not seek re-election this year and will be retiring from the state legislature after 19 years of service. Rep. Kawakami serves the 16th Representative District on Kauai, which includes Waimea, Koloa, Poipu and the islands of Niihau and Lehua.

The veteran lawmaker has been in office since 1987 when she was appointed to fill the seat of her late husband, former Speaker of the House Richard Kawakami. She is currently the Vice-Chair of the Committee on Finance, a position that she has held for 14 years--eight years working with Finance Chair Dwight Takamine, and six years with former Finance Chair Calvin Say who is now House Speaker. She also currently serves as a member of the Committee on Housing and the Committee on Human Services.

"I want to thank the people of Kauai who have supported me for nearly 20 years, and who have given me an incredible opportunity to help and represent the community," said Rep. Kawakami. "I'm proud to have been part of a solid and experienced legislative team from Kauai, and, together, I believe we accomplished many good things for the island."

In the past 19 years, Rep. Kawakami has literally brought in hundreds of millions of dollars to Kauai for the building of schools, libraries, public facilities, roads and other infrastructure. Major projects in recent years include a total of \$40 million for the Kauai courthouse, and \$10 million for the One Stop Center and \$500,000 for a second access road at Kauai Community College. In the 2006 session, Rep. Kawakami supported and fought for \$3.5 million for the Kauai YMCA swimming pool, working with Senator Gary Hooser and Representative Ezra Kanoho. At the State Capitol, there are few people who have the extensive knowledge of the state budget as Rep. Kawakami.

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"Representative Kawakami personifies the best in what a state legislator can be," said House Speaker Calvin Say. "She always fights hard for her district, but at the same time, she is always gracious and a true professional. As a former educator, her love and support for public education provided the House with great insight into the challenges of our educational system. She will be sorely missed."

In the area of health and public safety, Rep. Kawakami is responsible for the funding of the Kawaiola Medical Office Building in Waimea and for introducing the current law expanding the use of automatic external defibrillators (AED's) throughout the state. As a diabetic herself, the representative introduced the law that requires health insurers to cover diabetes self-management training education and supplies.

Rep. Kawakami is a strong supporter of Hawaiian culture and introduced laws that establish hula as the official dance of the state, surfing as the official sport of the state, and allow each island to choose their own official color and flower.

Rep. Kawakami is a graduate of Kamehameha School, and has a B.A. in education from the University of Hawaii and an M.A. in education from New York University. Prior to becoming a state legislator, she had a distinguished career in education, serving as a teacher, principal, district language arts specialist, education officer, and deputy district superintendent of Kauai public schools.

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